

**Kootenay Wildlife Harvest Advisory Committee Meeting  
August 29, 2011 7:00 PM Mountain Time (conference call)**

**Participating on Call:**

Dave Dunbar	Jim Turner
Tara Szkorupa	Steven Leuenberger
Kelly Lode	Ken Robins
Garth Mowat	Andy Pezderic
Donna Thornton	Rick Filmore
Don McNamar	Gary Gallo
Chris Stagg	

We have until October 1 to submit the draft hunting proposals. They will then be posted on a provincial website until November 15 for public to add comments/input. The comments received from the website will be forwarded to the Minister for examination. What happens if most want a change to a regulation; will it get changed or will Victoria have the final say? Chris feels that if the purpose of this 'consultation' is to try and gage the level of support, it is being misused, although an opportunity to provide input is a good thing. Jim agrees that it is about science based wildlife management and it's up to the biologists to make final decisions – Clubs are just asking for an opportunity to be heard. Dave says we'll be looking for valid concerns.

Dave anticipates that future meetings for the KWHAC will be through conference calls; the ministry budget is very tight. He doubts face to face meetings will be possible.

Hunter harvest questionnaire survey – do we have the results yet? We don't have those results yet, possibly in September, but Dave says there are other sources of data we can use to get the info about the elk hunt in the West Kootenay. Regardless, we are committed to providing the results of the Hunter Harvest Questionnaire to our stakeholders, as soon as it's available to region. Rick feels the harvest was quite high in the 1<sup>st</sup> year and wonders why we don't have compulsory reporting for harvest on elk in the WK? Tara feels compliance would be low for reporting so it would have to be **Compulsory Inspection**. Victoria said no to inspections because of the cost but will **add that recommendation for 2012**. CI for moose will be coming off next year so maybe that could free up money for elk CI's. Rick F indicated that the WKO were concerned about a two-year regulation proposal for elk (particularly if it further liberalizes the seasons), given their view that the bull harvest was too high.

**Review of Proposed Hunting and Trapping Regulation Changes (attached)**

**41213-01: Align 6 point bull elk seasons throughout region.**

4-18 is aligned. Rick is concerned about the high number of hunters in the area, the number of bulls that were killed last year, the potential for an excessive bull harvest and the fact there is no harvest data available. Although the Ministry has yet to see the harvest questionnaire results, healthy bull to cow ratios provide support for this regulation proposal.

**-02a – Add antlerless elk LEHs in the Elk Valley to address overgrazing on high elevation winter ranges.**

This regulation is about increasing antlerless elk hunting in Elk Valley. This stemmed from overgrazing on high elevation winter ranges and its negative impact on Bighorn sheep habitat. Special permits will be given to hunters to access higher elevation (not until after sheep season). 2 LEH seasons in the AMA only. An additional road permit after Oct 26 to avoid conflict with sheep hunters. Steven pointed out that there could be a conflict with the special Premier sheep hunt.

The EKWA is asking about a 3 point or higher elk season? Tara said that based on harvest data from when there was a 3 point season, it seemed like we could drop below our target bull to cow ratios. Garth feels a spike hunt would be more manageable, i.e. less risky, than a 3 point or better season; it would result in a broader age distribution.

**-02b – Expand Zone A of 4-23 for antlerless elk and extend LEH**

Reduce over grazing in some of these areas. Greater hunting opportunity. Spread the hunt outwards.

**-03 – Increase regional aggregate deer bag limit to 3**

Encourage increased doe harvest on whitetails. Why not change the bag limit to 2 does? Need to shoot those does to get the population problem under control. How about the return of the early deer doe season for archery? No other regions currently have 2 doe bag limit; should we care about other regions? Current bag limit is not achieving hunting management populations. Population numbers vary greatly between the East and West Kootenays, not to mention other regions, i.e. high numbers in the East and lower numbers in the West. Tara will propose a bag limit of 2 antlerless white-tailed deer, and will include this with the 3 deer bag limit proposal.

**-04 – Move the mule deer any buck season for youth hunters to Sept 10 – 30**

A conference call is scheduled for next week to discuss aligning dates with the Okanagan and Southern Interior. Steven stresses that our populations here are very different than the west Kootenay and Okanagan so we shouldn't try to align. The idea behind the Sept 1 – 9 was so kids could hunt when they were still out of school.

**-05 – Begin a sheep ewe hunt in Bull River and perhaps other areas where the sheep population is very high and at risk of disease**

The goal is to reduce sheep below carrying capacity in order to increase individual body condition. Less likely to have disease outbreak. Can't take sheep across borders so transplants are out of the question. Higher population in 4-22 so Irene feels this would be this would be the first area for disease outbreak. Andy wonders how popular the hunt will be with the price of a sheep tag (i.e., at \$60)? People may not put in for the draw but we'll try one MU for now. Another option would be to approach First Nations and ask them to harvest the sheep. Changes to the Wildlife Act are currently taking place so now might be the time to change the regulation to 2 tags. **ACTION: Garth to approach Victoria about adding Ewe tag** (presumably this would be at a much lower cost than for a ram). What about transplanting sheep into north part of Grasmere? Irene and Larry Ingham seemed to be in favour of this. Garth will ask Larry about this. Vice President of BC Wildsheep Foundation supports regulation if there is no transplant option.

**-06 – Drop bobcat quota for trappers**

Supported. Trappers will be happy with that. Drop quota for trappers only; no change to hunting bag limit.

**-07 – Revise bobcat and lynx hunting season to make it illegal to kill females accompanied by young.**

Carried by Victoria, not Garth. Writing draft right now in Victoria.

**-08 – Lengthen lynx trapping season**

Don felt trappers would be happy with this.

**-09 – Start lynx hunting season earlier**

Two regional changes to lynx.

Start hunting season earlier (Nov 15 – Feb 15). Our region is most conservative but Garth doesn't see why it should be. Other regions start Nov. 15. Hunters most concerned about opening date more than closing date. Steven feels a one month hunt is fine – could end 15 days earlier if beginning 15 day ahead. Steven said they'd be happy with Dec 15 as long as the season begins earlier.

Garth suggests commenting on lynx opening and closing date and how they affect your business – don't waste time on the bobcat changes.

**-10 – Split grizzly bear 4-32 LEH zones in two.**

Distribute hunter kill more evenly across the management unit. Spread female kill around the region. Will have no impact on opportunity.

**-11 – Add registered ‘Disabled Hunter’ category to the same seasons as the ‘Senior/Youth’ GOS hunts in ag/wr zones.**

CODA has requested this season. Disabled hunters should be carrying a letter to identify themselves properly. This hunt may extend to zone 4-08 by request of disabled hunters in WK. This is to try to alleviate problems between disabled hunters and able bodied hunters. Victoria has turned down the ‘disabled’ hunt in the past when trying to add it to the junior/senior season. In the WK they would have to be given an LEH permit. CODA would like special seasons just for disabled. Dave feels offering a permit for this would be ideal because disabled hunters could hunt for an easy animal and there wouldn’t end up being a conflict with hunters in vehicle closure areas. The Regional manager may consider kill permits. May try to expand in the future but this is a good starting point.

**-12 – North trench – expand Zone X of 4-26 into 4-34, 4-35 and 4-25. Keep current 4-26 LEH for the larger WMU area.**

A survey was done in north trench and elk numbers seem relatively high. There is opposition from the Golden Rod & Gun Club. Invermere R&G opposes as well. Andy says depredation data needs to be provided in order to sell it to the rod & gun clubs. Data is provided by Ministry of Agriculture (MAG) showing some increases. Compensation Program with MAG collects the numbers/trends. Payouts have increased for the north trench. Populations really vary between the north and south so it would only be a fraction of the permits for the north (much lower number). Donna will ask Mike Malmberg for his reports from past. **Action – send north trench elk survey report.** If kill data is conservative, Andy thinks clubs may be okay with it. Windermere clubs upset with ag hunt in 4-26. Not many homesteader elk in early season. Another option would be to extend to 4-25 only (Tara). Donna will put proposal forward with 2 options: 4-25 only; and all 3 units, to get comments on both options.



North trench elk  
survey 2011 (...)

**-13 – Propose LEH regulation change to synchronize antlerless elk hunting season with the USA in south RMT near border.**

Hoping to provide more disturbance on Canadian side. Would be very few permits issued to push the elk back to Montana. Steven doesn’t see how this will help. He has not observed anyone from Montana shooting at the elk late in the season. Some biologist expressed concern

about hitting migratory elk. Permit numbers would be low to start out. Goal is disturbance, not to get elk on the ground. Donna will put forward to HQ's.

#### **-14 – Bonus Tag**

Objective is to increase removal of antlerless elk. The tag would restrict them to the Ag zone, not to go anywhere they wish. Maybe this could be accomplished by a bag limit change where the 2<sup>nd</sup> has to be taken within a certain zone (ag zone)? How to report this? The COS didn't express any strong concerns about this idea. Other suggestions: add more LEH, lengthen GOS season, lower age for seniors. Issue as many LEH tags as necessary to reach objectives. Garth feels this proposal requires more thought. How many people would even want to shoot 2 elk? Donna will talk to Jeff Morgan about this proposal.

#### **-15 – Lengthen black bear GOS hunting season**

This proposal was put forward by the COS. Already offered in Reg 8. Private land hunt in August. Get list of hunters interested in hunting black bears. Reduces some of COS workload. WKO recommends bringing season start date back a couple weeks (Aug 15) with no bag limit. Garth said Ministers don't like 'no bag limit'. Rick would like to see hunt open to Crown land (maybe below 1100 m) not just private land.

#### **-16 – Lengthen trapper's black bear hunting season**

There is a shorter season in the south part of the province but our trappers here have much more snow so would like to stretch it into May 30.

#### **-17 – Lengthen grizzly bear hunting season**

Doesn't change the number of bears that will be killed, it only lengthens the season. Guide GB harvest – given quota like other species. Resident tags given out based on success rates in that unit. Extend from June 5<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup>. Will definitely get more success from residents. Use a 10% maximum success rate – right now at about 6% for some northern units. Ken worries that in the next few years we'll kill too many and the unit will be shut down. Garth said we will put out limited number of permits to reduce this risk. Not often is it resident hunting that will close a unit. Andy – limited number of tags in anticipation of higher harvest can affect allocation calculator. If residents use up their allocation, it shouldn't affect guide outfitters. Incidental kills are often the reason a unit is closed down.

#### **-18 – close the mountain goat hunt in MU 4-14**

The management plan is now signed off. If less than 50 goats in population they don't want them hunted. Very low goat population in 4-14 – no goat has been killed in this population since 2001. This is an obvious one to close. Andy – identifying stand alone populations could

be a difficult. Garth doesn't think we'll have time to work on this before consultation time; 4-14 was the obvious one. Need accurate population numbers to base things on. That exercise will have to wait till 2014.

Additional proposals that were considered and rejected by Wildlife staff

1. Shorten mule deer seasons if harvest too high in 2010 and 2011. Although anecdotal information suggests an overharvest in localized, accessible areas, our monitoring indicated that post-season buck to doe ratios were generally higher than the minimum target. We have 2 years of additional HCTF funding to closely monitor this season. If conservation risks are identified, we will shorten the season.
2. Create a late bow season (Dec 1 – 10) for any mule deer buck. We are currently testing the sustainability of the new any buck season (October 1 – 31) in the East Kootenay, and have concerns about the potential for overharvest. Hence we feel it is premature to add yet another mule deer buck season during a time of year when mule deer are highly vulnerable. This season may be considered in the future.
3. Changing the wolf and coyote season to “no closed season”. This was rejected because of the humane issue related to the killing of female wolves while there are pups in the den. More discussion is required on the topic of predation and predator mgmt.
4. The WKO is suggesting a seniors hunt for MD and elk during the bow season. *Proposal should read 'deer', not 'MD'. Conflict with archery season. WKO doesn't feel these 'dates' belong to archery season only. Why do we cater to bow hunters more than seniors? Special seasons have already been given to seniors so why impact onto bow hunters. There is a significant increase in the number of bow hunters. A suggestion is to offer senior hunts outside the archery season for the different species.*
5. Expand the LEH Zone C of 4-07 up higher than 1100 m in the Corn and Dodge Creek drainages to help draw elk off farmers' fields. Discussed but met with opposition from F&W/ Ecosystems/Habitat. *Staff couldn't agree on objectives so it didn't get supported.*

Additional comments:

- Chris didn't anticipate coming to this meeting before being able to canvass clubs with info to bring to the table. He would have preferred to be able to come better prepared. Dave apologized for the short notice and Garth told Chris that these proposals can be amended over the next 30 days. Clubs have from Nov 1 -15 to provide input. Chris is concerned about time frame to comment and wished they had more time to review. Dave is certain new timelines cannot be extended. **ACTION: Dave will check with HQs to inquire about a one month extension.**
- Dave - Access closure in 4-32 for elk. Access review has eliminated a lot of poor VAHCs. Improve measures to convert to AMA (seasonal). Reviewing options for that. Will be

reviewed in depth and hope to have submission package in next couple years. Need to really think about what values we are protecting.

- Minutes from last meeting – attachments will be sent separately.
- Email from WKO email asking for regulation changes and clarifications. 1 – delay process a month. 2 – senior hunt to overlap bow hunt. 3 – forward to Aaron Reid – Garth has done this and sent reply to Liz Lord of the WKO. 4 – number of permits for sheep hunt? How do they come up with that number? Why is it down to 7? Look at sheep spreadsheet. 5. Would like to see permit number reduced for co/calf moose in the Revelstoke area. Tag #'s are to hold moose population at 500.
- Don – trappers – incidental cougar and fisher kills will be processed by the trapper and sent to auction, the money will go into trapper education. Paul Rasmussen is willing to do it using a Sundry permit if trappers can show him a way to track the money will go into that fund. **This meeting is tentatively set for Sept. 20 at noon in Nelson.**



Proposed  
regulation changes 2